

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT

SUBJECT: COALITION PARTY SUMMIT ACHIEVES COMPROMISE ON LAW AND
ORDER ISSUE

REF: ROME 4469

1. IN SUMMIT MEETING ON MORNING OF MARCH 27 THE CENTER-LEFT
COALITION PARTIES AGREED ON COMPROMISE LAW AND ORDER PROGRAM
AS ANTICIPATED IN REFTEL. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC),
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI), AND REPUBLICANS (PRI) ACCEPTED
GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS WITH SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS. SOCIALISTS
(PSI) AGREED WITH SOME RELUCTANCE, RESERVING THEIR POSITION
ON TWO POINTS WHICH WILL BE DEBATED ANEW WHEN PARLIAMENT
CONSIDERS THE DRAFT LEGISLATION. THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS
WHICH WAS ALWAYS A SMALL CLOUD ON THE HORIZON WAS THUS
FOR THE MOMENT AVOIDED.

2. THE TWO POINTS ON WHICH THE PSI RESERVED THEIR
POSITION WERE A PROVISION TO PERMIT POLICE TO IDENTIFY
AND SEARCH (BUT NOT ACTUALLY ARREST) SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUALS
IN THE VICINITY OF IMPORTANT AND VULNERABLE INSTALLATIONS
SUCH AS BROADCASTING INSTALLATIONS, POWER STATIONS, ETC.,
AND AN INCREASE IN THE PENALTIES FOR VIOLENCE PERPETRATED
AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE POLICE. WHILE THESE TWO POINTS
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ARE NOT AGREED AMONG THE MAJORITY PARTIES, THE GOVERNMENT

NOW HAS A GREEN LIGHT TO PROCEED TO PARLIAMENT WITH THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WHICH CAN BE PRESUMABLY DEBATED AND PERHAPS PASSED WITHOUT EVER RECEIVING THE FORMAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY, AT LEAST IN THE PRESENT WORDING OF THE DRAFT BILL.

3. IT WAS ALSO AGREED IN THIS MORNING'S MEETING, THAT THE QUESTION OF PERMITTING THE FORMATION OF A UNION WITHIN THE POLICE STRUCTURE WOULD BE POSTPONED. INSTEAD, THE PROPOSAL OF INTERIOR MINISTER GUI (DC) TO CREATE SOME REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISM THROUGH WHICH POLICE COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES CAN BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF SUPERIORS WOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT ON A TRIAL BASIS. THE COMPROMISE PACKAGE WILL BE REVIEWED THIS EVENING BY THE CABINET AND FORWARDED TO THE PARLIAMENT FOR ACTION.

4. THE COMPROMISE HAVING BEEN REACHED, IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT THE REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL, AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS DUE THIS SUMMER WOULD BE HELD ON JUNE 15. THE HUNE 15 DATE WILL PERMIT THE 18 YEAR OLDS TO BE ADDED TO THE ELECTORAL LISTS IN TIME TO VOTE. TODAY'S CABINET MEETING WILL ALSO APPROVE THE JUNE 15 DATE FOR THE ELECTIONS.

5. COMMENT: THE SOCIALISTS ARE CLEARLY NOT HAPPY WITH THE TWO PROVISIONS OF INTERIOR MINISTER GUI'S DRAFT BILL ON WHICH THEY RESERVED. HOWEVER, THE ALTERNATIVE WAS TO RISK A GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS MIGHT BE NECESSARY. DE MARTINO WAS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO AVOID A RUPTURE BETWEEN THE PSI AND THE OTHER CENTER-LEFT PARTIES. TODAY'S PRESS REPORTED A STRONG CRITICISM OF DE MARTINO BY HIS PSI RIVAL, MANCINI. MANCINI ACCUSED DE MARTINO OF PAINTING HIMSELF INTO A CORNER FROM WHICH THERE WERE ONLY TWO EXITS; I.E., TO CLIMB DOWN FROM THE SOCIALISTS' POSITIONS OF PRINCIPLE OR TRIGGER A BREAKDOWN IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO EARLY ELECTIONS. IN FACT DE MARTINO HAS DONE NEITHER. IN A VERY ITALIAN SOLUTION, THE CRUNCH ON THE TWO DISPUTED ARTICLES HAS BEEN PUT ASIDE FOR ANOTHER DAY WHEN THEY CAN BE OBSCURED

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OR MODIFIED IN A WAY WHICH WILL NOT INVOLVE ANY CLEAR-CUT LOSS OF FACE BY THE PSI. A CRISIS ON THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE IS THUS NOT REPEAT NOT DEFINITELY AVOIDED BUT IT IS AVOIDED FOR THE MOMENT.BEAUDRY

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